

**THE LEGISLATIVE BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION ON AUTISM:  
Task Force on Early Identification & Intervention  
December 13, 2006  
10:00AM to 3:00PM**

**The Help Group  
Sherman Oaks Campus; Auditorium  
13130 Burbank Blvd  
Sherman Oaks, CA 91401-6037  
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**Translating Priority Problems and Gaps into State-level Solutions**

Dear Colleague,

We are pleased to provide this update with regards to the important and productive work that is underway by the Autism Commission Task Force on Early Identification & Intervention. The attachments that accompany this email include the following items:

- The Agenda for the next Early Identification & Intervention Task Force meeting on Wednesday, December 13<sup>th</sup>.
- The summary and notes from the first Task Force meeting on November 14<sup>th</sup>. Pertinent background information from that meeting is also included.

The forthcoming task force meeting on December 13<sup>th</sup> will focus on the identification of possible solutions, strategies and opportunities to close the gaps and to improve the “problem areas” that exist currently. After an initial review of the most pressing issues that were identified during the initial meeting (please see Attachment C & Attachment D); the Task Force will reconvene in four problem-oriented work groups. Each of these work groups will be asked to discuss and come with the following:

- A succinct definition of the specific problem and to clearly identify the “gap/gaps” in existing systems.
- A specific recommendation as to how this problem (and/or gap/gaps) can be improved.
- A “manageable” number of problems/recommendations

Subsequently, the Task Force will reconvene to hear and discuss and prioritize the recommendations provided by each workgroup.

We are pleased to have this unique opportunity to improve the lives of individuals with autism throughout California and the nation. Therefore, it is important that specific issues be identified and that “doable” solutions are provided. In this regards, consideration of the following factors may be helpful:

- Could we be more specific in defining the problem/gap?
- What are the specific barriers that contribute to this problem? For example: Does the problem stem from the structure of existing law? Is there a gap not covered by law? Is

## IIA\_Update on Early ID & Intervention Task Force (Second Meeting)

there an implementation problem? Is there inadequate funding, training, information, coordination, accountability, etc?

- What is the state's role and responsibility to address this problem, including any legal mandates? Identify the state role as compared to the role of other entities.
- What are solutions to this problem/gap? What specific changes are needed at the state level?
  - What is the feasibility of change?
  - Is the idea ready for implementation?
  - Will it require additional resources?
  - Will it require policy development, new technology, or systems change?
  - Is it cost effective, meaning it is the right thing to do at the right time?
  - Is it consistent with the state's values, role, and responsibilities? Is there a way to measure success or failure?
  - Is there potential for systemic change that would benefit a larger population of children?
- Are there any successful models to learn from? Are there opportunities to leverage? What are the possible strategies?
- Have we identified and addressed the factors and issues that are related to diversity, equity and cultural competence?
- What information is available that describes or demonstrates this problem? Who and how many individuals are affected? What information do we wish was available? Is it possible to obtain this information quickly and how? Are there other experts and stakeholders that need to be engaged in this issue?

We are most grateful for your interest and participation in The Legislative Blue Ribbon Commission on Autism.

Sincerely,

Barbara Firestone, Ph.D.; Autism Commission, Vice-Chair;  
Task Force, Chair

Eleni Tsakopoulos-Kounalakis; Autism Commissioner;  
Task Force, Vice-Chair